



# EVERYONE IN HARMONY

A BOLD VISION FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE





Back in 1938, O.C. Cash and Rupert Hall stumbled upon something quite profound: the joy and transformation sparked by four voices singing together.

Rooted in African American traditions, this wonderful music – barbershop music – embodied the transformative power to change men for the better. Perhaps it was in the transcendental overtones of well-tuned chords, or the tender emotions of the songs themselves, or simply in the strength of true harmony and camaraderie.

Resolved to preserve this fine tradition and propagate its growth, our founders brought 26 men together on a rooftop to sing, and thus our humble Society was born – the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America.



## Now in our ninth decade, it's time to pause and reflect on where we've been ... and where we're going.

Our founding members did much for our Society, leaving us with a set of enduring purposes. They also made key decisions that, while befitting the times, no longer serve us today.

We've spent the last several years re-focusing our energy and regaining momentum, building stronger programs and re-establishing our voice in the choral field. In fact, it's safe to say that our current vision has already been realized: We have become "the premier membership organization for men who love to sing."

Along the way, we've realized a few things:

- We, as a Society, understand and embrace the transformative power of harmony.
- Our members have an appetite for change.
- The collective time, talent, and generosity of our members are our greatest assets – and we have released only a fraction of that potential.
- What worked in our past may not work for our future.

Most importantly, we realize that harmony is a gift we've been entrusted with, and it's too wonderful to keep to ourselves. We must share it with young and old, with people of every color and every background, with our neighbors and perfect strangers and everyone in between, because the world needs what we have.

In times of conflict and exclusion, barbershop inspires us to blend, to cooperate, to create beauty and to love each other. Imagine its impact as a balm for wounded warriors, an intervention for at-risk youth, as a way to ease end-of-life transition, or even as a better way to rehabilitate people in our prison system.

It's time to see barbershop as more than a treasure for our own enjoyment, but as a force for direct impact on society. We have the resources and the capability. And now, we have a renewed vision:

**Everyone in harmony.**



Our governing purposes are as relevant today as they've ever been:

- To perpetuate the old American institution, the Barbershop quartet, and to promote and encourage vocal harmony and good fellowship among its members throughout the world by the formation of local chapters and districts composed of members interested in [our purposes].
- To hold annual, local, district, state, national and international contests in quartet and chorus singing.
- To encourage and promote the education of its members and the public in music appreciation.
- To promote public appreciation of Barbershop quartet and chorus singing by publication and dissemination thereof.
- To initiate, promote and participate in charitable projects.
- To establish and maintain music scholarships and charitable foundations.
- To initiate and maintain a broad program of musical education, particularly in the field of vocal harmony and the allied arts.

As we move boldly forward, we believe we can serve these purposes in thrilling new ways.



Let's use what we've learned about getting men singing together to get everyone singing together, across cultures and generations.

We will carry this vision forward through four key strategies.



# 1

**PRESERVATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

We no longer live in a world of joiners. So our first priority—with a fierce focus on the power of technology and digital marketing—is to create more ways than ever for people to participate in barbershop singing, whatever form that may take.

- We will welcome all people who are interested in barbershopping, not just those with the time, money, and inclination to become “members.”
- We will customize the barbershop experience to fit each person's interests, needs, and capacity.
- We will offer a variety of packages and plans, so people can pay for the level of engagement that suits them.

# 2

**BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF ARTISTS**

A one-size-fits-all approach to how chapters and districts are structured is no longer sufficient. We envision vibrant networks of barbershoppers everywhere, creating their own experiences and communities with our support.

- We will build a revitalized suite of products and services that catalyze healthy quartets, choruses, and chapters.
- We will promote new ways for organizing communities of barbershoppers. Experimental new models will stand alongside existing chapter structures.
- We will re-invest in and revitalize quartet singing.
- We will better capitalize on the potential of our Districts, as well as the skill and dedication of volunteer leaders.

# 3

**DRIVING IMPACT THROUGH PROGRAMS**

We've long had the energy and creativity to operate many programs and activities. Now, as stewards of trust and resources, it's time to evaluate and refine them.

- We will double down on programs that perform strongly, while letting go of those that have outlived their purpose, freeing up valuable resources and capacity for the strongest programs.
- We will create a program development and innovation model.
- We will leverage data about impact and outcomes to make wise investment decisions.
- We will put particular priority on new programs that create positive impact on society and produce substantial net revenue to fund our mission.

# 4

**SUPPORTING A WHOLE WORLD OF SINGING**

By serving more singers and singing organizations than previously imagined, we can increase our impact throughout the world and create a sustainable, scalable financial model, all while preserving the unique opportunity for men to sing together.

- We will expand our sights to become an organization that supports all forms of barbershop singing, with a women's organization and a mixed barbershop organization in addition to our current men's organization.
- We will provide infrastructure and essential services to all three entities, improving their impact and efficacy while generating earned income in support of our original purposes.
- Believing that all people should be able to choose how they want to sing barbershop, we will prioritize local control and self-destination above all.



Making possibilities possible.



Standing on the shoulders of those who came before us, we're ready to embark on this expansive vision together, with these four key strategies leading the way.

But first, we must together acknowledge that our Society was founded, as many things were at the time, as an exclusive organization. And while the decision about race was formally reversed in 1963, the cultural implication as an overwhelmingly white male organization has lived on until today.

Today we proclaim our vision to be one of everyone in harmony. Even supporting a women's and a mixed barbershop organization is not enough to realize this vision. We must first take a major step with our existing organization, and it must be one of action and not just words.

**We must unequivocally turn away from any cultural vestiges of exclusion. We must become radically inclusive and diverse, across cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual orientation, social, economic and generational lines. Let us hereby declare our commitment to this transformation.**

United in purpose, vision and priorities, we believe that we have the skills, passion and potential to change the world.

Our ambitious vision will require superlative organizational and executive leadership. To that end, we will build a culture that is committed to impact, capable of operational excellence, and empowered to innovate.

Strategically, we will build revenue, brand and unity through an integrated marketing approach that is keenly focused on driving revenue opportunities at all points of participation and engagement, while building a consistent, unified global barbershop brand. We will do this within a financial model that supports significant investments in the future and allows us to think differently about how we exchange value and what it "costs" to participate.

We will take a global view of the barbershop harmony movement, and begin to explore a careful, diplomatic transition from a relatively passive and supportive role to actively facilitating partnerships and collaborations that spread barbershop worldwide.

Operationally, we will evaluate our structures from top to bottom to unleash the impact of legions of engaged volunteers. Our management approach will rigorously evaluate and assess our work to measure the true impacts and outcomes of what we do. Our supporting infrastructure (including technology) will allow new ways of interacting with people and communities interested in barbershop.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step, and we want you on the journey with us! The vision is just the first piece to come out of our Strategic Planning process – the implementation will continue over the next 5-10 years. For now, nothing changes in how we make music together today; rather, the Vision provides new clarity on where we want to go in the future. The Society Board, leadership and staff will next develop plans for bringing these strategies to life. Look for more information at upcoming District and Society Conventions.

The most up-to-date information on the Strategic Planning process, including FAQs about what this means for you, is available at [barbershop.org/everyoneinharmony](https://barbershop.org/everyoneinharmony).

Email [strategy@barbershop.org](mailto:strategy@barbershop.org) for specific questions or feedback

